

know, all too well, the terrible impact of exploding nuclear weapons over the Nevada desert. Among other consequences, these tests in the 1950's exposed millions of Americans to large amounts of radioactive Iodine-131, which accumulates in the thyroid gland and has been linked to thyroid cancer. "Hot Spots," where the Iodine-131 fallout was the greatest, were identified by a National Cancer Institute report as receiving 5-16 rads of Iodine-131. The "Hot Spots" included many areas far away from Nevada, including New York, Massachusetts and Iowa. Outside reviewers have shown that the 5-16 rad level is only an average, with many people having received much higher exposure levels, especially those who were children at the time.

To put that in perspective, federal standards for nuclear power plants require that protective action be taken for 15 rads. To further understand the enormity of the potential exposure, consider this: 150 million curies of Iodine-131 were released by the above ground nuclear weapons testing in the United States, about three times more than from the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster in the former Soviet Union.

It is all too clear that outlawing above-ground tests were in the interest of our Nation. I strongly believe that banning all nuclear tests is also in our interests.

October also marked some key steps the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty or CTBT. On October 2, 1992, President Bush signed into law the U.S. moratorium on all nuclear tests. The moratorium was internationalized when, just a few year later, on September 24, 1996, a second step was taken—the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, or CTBT, was opened for signature. The United States was the first to sign this landmark treaty.

Mr. President, a little more than a year ago, President Clinton took a third important step in abolishing nuclear weapons tests by transmitting the CTBT to the United States Senate for ratification. Unfortunately, the Senate has yet to take the additional step of ratifying the CTBT. I am hopeful that we in the Senate will debate and vote on ratification of the Treaty, and continue the momentum toward the important goal of a worldwide ban on nuclear weapons testing.

Many believed we had conquered the dangerous specter of nuclear war after the Cold War came to an end and many former Soviet states became our allies. Unfortunately, recent developments in South Asia remind us that we need to be vigilant in our cooperative international efforts to reduce the dangers of nuclear weapons.

It is especially important that the Senate act before the September 1999 deadline for ratification by 44 countries. If the United States fails to ratify the CTBT, then we will not have a voice in the special international conference which will negotiate how to ac-

celerate the treaty into force. Yet, as a signatory, we will still be bound by its provisions.

The CTBT is a major milestone in the effort to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It would establish a permanent ban on all nuclear explosions in all environments for any purpose. Its "zero-yield" prohibition on nuclear tests would help to halt the development and deployment of new nuclear weapons. The Treaty would also establish a far-reaching verification regime that includes a global network of sophisticated seismic, hydro-acoustic and radionuclide monitoring stations, as well as on-site inspection of test sites to deter and detect violations.

It is vital to our national security for the nuclear arms race to come to an end, and the American people recognize this. In a recent poll commissioned by the Coalition to Reduce Nuclear dangers, nearly 50 percent of voters supported "eliminating nuclear weapons worldwide" and an additional third support "reducing the number of nuclear weapons worldwide". In addition, a 1997 poll by the Mellman Group for the Henry J. Stimson Center found that 69 percent of voters believe the goal of the United States should be to reduce or eliminate nuclear weapons.

It is heartening to know that the American people understand the risks of a world with nuclear weapons. It is now time for policymakers to recognize this as well. There is no better way to honor the hard work and dedication of those who developed the LTBT and the CTBT than for the U.S. Senate to immediately ratify the CTBT. Our Nation's role as the world's only remaining superpower demands no less.●

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR DR. LINDA ERWIN

● Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Dr. Linda Erwin of Portland, Oregon, for her career as both a gifted medical professional and as a tireless and dedicated educator. As one of the first healthcare professionals in the Pacific Northwest to recognize that gun violence is a public health issue, Dr. Erwin has just been awarded the National Crime Prevention Council's Ameritech Award of Excellence in Crime Prevention. She is one of only seven people throughout the Nation to receive this honor.

Dr. Erwin is currently the Assistant Director of Trauma Services at Legacy Emanuel Hospital, and it was through her experiences as a trauma surgeon that she first became aware of the need for increased education about violence—especially gun violence. Dr. Erwin has taken advantage of her position, education, and talents to reach beyond the trauma room to educate young people throughout the Pacific Northwest.

While working in England for two years, Dr. Erwin treated a total of two patients for gunshot wounds. Upon re-

turning to Portland, she was struck by the high numbers of gunshot wound patients being treated each year at Emanuel Hospital. After speaking with victims and their families and friends, she realized that most young people did not recognize or understand the consequences of their risky behavior. Since then, Dr. Erwin has worked as a leading advocate for gun violence prevention, intervention and education.

One of the keys to Dr. Erwin's success has been her ability to create partnerships. Many of the programs that she has initiated bring together and combine the efforts of the medical, legal, law enforcement, and education communities as well as non-profit organizations and committed volunteers.

Dr. Erwin has successfully spread her message throughout the Portland community with such programs as "Save Our Youth," "Safe Schools Safe Lives," "Firearms as a Public Health Crisis" and "American Epidemic Programs." She has also lectured throughout the Pacific Northwest, taking her educational presentations to peer and youth groups throughout the states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

Dr. Linda Erwin is an outstanding example of a professional who has given her time, resources, and knowledge to the community for the betterment of all. For these reasons, Dr. Erwin has received Ameritech's Award of Excellence in Crime Prevention. I would like to thank her on behalf of all those whose lives she lives she has touched.

NATIONAL FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

● Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, this week the nation joins in marking National Fire Prevention Week, a time set aside not only to remember those who were injured and those who tragically lost their lives due to fire, but also to acknowledge the heroic efforts of those men and women who work so hard to prevent and protect us against such tragedies.

Every year, more than 5,000 Americans die in fires and another 25,000 sustain fire-related injuries. The majority of these fires, around 80%, occur in the home. Fortunately, many of these deaths and injuries can be prevented by simply planning ahead.

The most important function of National Fire Prevention Week is that of raising awareness about the dangers of fire and the relatively simple steps we can take to prevent fire-related tragedies.

The theme of this year's National Fire Prevention Week, "Fire Drills: The Great Escape," serves to encourage the public to practice and plan a home escape plan. This involves a number of steps and I want to touch on them briefly. According to officials at the United States Fire Administration (USFA), the first step in developing a home escape plan is the installation of smoke alarms on every floor. It is estimated that working smoke alarms can

actually double your chances of survival in the event of fire.

Smoke alarms, though, are not the only element of a home escape plan. It is vital that every individual in a household knows and practices at least two escape routes from every room in that home. If confronted by a fire, one should first escape the burning house and then meet at a previously designated family meeting place outside of the home. Then, the fire department should be notified. Finally, by no means should anyone attempt to re-enter a burning home.

Mr. President, I rise today in support of the theme of this year's National Fire Protection Week and to encourage the development of as many home escape plans as possible. The fact is that no one is immune to the dangers of fire, but if they develop a plan similar to the USFA's their chances of survival are significantly increased.

Today, on the anniversary of one of our nation's worst fires, the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, I want to commend the National Fire Protection Association for sponsoring National Fire Protection Week and to urge my colleagues and all citizens to pay careful attention to the theme and message of this year's National Fire Protection Week, so that we may continue to reduce such preventable losses.●

TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER WARDREP

● Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Jennifer Wardrep, one of my finest employees who has worked for me, in one capacity or another, for five years. Jennifer came to work for my press office when I was the Secretary of State of Georgia. She had recently graduated from East Carolina University where she studied journalism and political science. Jennifer had a successful career in college, working for the student newspaper and rising to become its editor.

In the Secretary of State's office, Jennifer quickly won my respect and that of her coworkers for her hard work and writing skills. She spent many long nights working in the Georgia Capitol to make it possible for the people of Georgia to receive the news of State elections, the new Motor Voter laws and all of the important work handled by that office. Her dedication to me, and that office, is something for which I am deeply in her debt.

In December of 1995, Jennifer left the safety of her "good government job" for the exciting but temporary life of a political campaign. Once again, Jennifer came to work for me, on my long-shot attempt to become a United States Senator. If there ever was a time when I needed a good press person, it was then. Jennifer was a huge part of a successful media campaign that let the voters of Georgia decide for themselves who was best suited to represent them in the U.S. Senate.

I remember one time in particular when we were traveling through South

Georgia talking to several newspapers and many more voters. It was late in the campaign and we were all tired and ready for the election. Jennifer kept me on message as much as humanly possible and rewarded me with candy. This creative thinking is typical of Jennifer. As she and I will both affirm, it sometimes takes innovative approaches to confine me to one message.

I went to bed on election night not knowing for certain if I had won the race. Early the next morning, my phone rang and woke me up. It was Jennifer and she said "Good morning, Senator." The people of Georgia had heard our message of hope and opportunity, several news organizations wanted to interview me and this was my wake-up call. Jennifer was the first person to call me "Senator." I will never forget that moment and I want to thank her very much for that.

After the election, I asked Jennifer to come to Washington with me where she became my Press Secretary. The tenacious media in Washington was no match for her. Although the southern hospitality of Atlanta was nothing like the rough and tumble of Washington, Jennifer's experience paid off. Jennifer quickly established good relationships with the media and helped me share with the people of Georgia the work we were doing on campaign finance reform, Georgia's defense operations and many, many more things.

Although I have said it many times, I truly believe that I have the best staff on Capitol Hill. And I truly believe I have the best Press Secretary on Capitol Hill as well. Jennifer has decided to move on to other things and I wish her the best of luck at whatever she does, although I doubt she will need it. Jennifer has served the people of Georgia well and served me extraordinarily well. Whether it was setting up press conferences, sending out news releases, writing PSA's, or recording Internet messages, Jennifer Wardrep is an irreplaceable part of my staff and will always be my "Tiger" in the press office.●

THE BUDGET SURPLUS

● Mr. KYL. Mr. President, September 30 marked the end of fiscal year 1998, and, for the first time since 1969, the news is written in black ink, not red. Although the final numbers will not be available for a few more weeks, it appears that the federal government will end the year with a unified budget surplus of about \$70 billion.

Mr. President, this is truly a dramatic turnaround. After all, it was only three years ago that President Clinton submitted a budget plotting \$200 billion deficits well into the next century. I recall that skeptics back then often derided a balanced budget as a risky idea, something that could even threaten Social Security. Now, however, the skeptics seem to concede what many of us have been saying all along—that a balanced budget is good

for America and good for Social Security.

What does a balanced budget mean for hard-working Americans? For one thing, it means lower interest rates. The rate on a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage might be as high as 9.5 percent, instead of the current average of about 6.6 percent, had Washington continued to rack up deficits as large as those experienced in the early 1990s.

The savings from lower interest rates can be substantial. Just a one point drop on a \$100,000 mortgage amounts to monthly savings of \$67, or more than \$24,000 over the 30-year term of a mortgage. We are talking here, not about just a one point drop, but rates that are two to three points lower than just a few years ago.

Lower interest rates on student loans make a college education more affordable for young people, and lower rates on car loans mean that hard-working men and women all around the country can stretch their budgets a little farther. A balanced budget literally means money in people's pockets.

The first thing we should do at the beginning of this new fiscal year is commit that we will maintain a balanced federal budget for the American people. We can certainly debate what to do with emerging budget surpluses, but there should be no longer be any debate that our national policy ought to be to keep the budget in balance.

Mr. President, now that the budget is finally in balance, we have the unique opportunity to consider other issues without the cloud of big deficits hanging overhead. For example, we ought to consider whether tax rates are at their optimal level, or whether they are too high. By definition, a budget surplus means that our government is collecting more than is necessary for current operations. People are paying simply paying more than they need to.

Perhaps, instead of keeping tax rates higher than they need to be, we ought to reduce income-tax rates across the board—for single people and married couples, people with children and those without, young people just getting a start and seniors trying to make ends meet on fixed incomes. It seems to me that every taxpaying American deserves a break.

We could also reduce taxes on savings and investment—lower the tax on capital gains and eliminate the death tax—two things that would help keep the already lengthy economic expansion from petering out. If we have learned anything from recent experience, it is that a strong economy, more than tax-rate increases or modest spending cuts, is what it takes to turn budget deficits into surpluses. The booming economy has been pouring billions of extra tax dollars into the Treasury. If we want that revenue flow to continue, we need to be sure that tax policy is conducive to sustained economic growth.

But the fact is, tax relief is not going to pass this year. President Clinton has